Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 04732 01 OF 02 260906Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 /058 W
----------024019 260916Z /12
R 260720Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5293
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 4732

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT PDEV PGOV LE SAY
SUBJ: NEW BROAD NATIONAL FRONT SIGNALS SYRIAN-WALID JUMBLATT ALLIANCE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. ON SEPTEMBER 12 PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP) LEADER WALID JUMBLATT AND PRO-SYRIAN BAATH PARTY LEADER ASSEM KANSO SIGNED AGREEMENT IN DAMASCUS LAYING OUT TERMS FOR NEW BROAD NATIONAL FRONT (BNF). AGREEMENT ALLOWS ALL ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT, INCLUDING COMMUNIST PARTY AND COMMUNIST ACTION ORGANIZATION, TO JOIN BNF. NATIONAL MOVEMENT MEMBERS BELIEVE THAT WALID JUMBLATT WILL DOMINATE BNF, BUT ACKNOWLEDGE THAT FORMER PRIME MINISTER RACHID KARAME IS FRONT RUNNER FOR BNF PRESIDENT. SYRIAN ENDORSEMENT OF NEW BNF ADDS UP TO TACTICAL SHIFT TO LEFT BY DAMASCUS AND SEEMS TO REPRESENT SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT FOR JUMBLATT. NEW BNF COULD ALSO LEAD TO SPLIT OF ISLAMIC GROUP. END SUMMARY.

2. ON SEPTEMBER 12 WALID JUMBLATT, LEADER OF PROGRESSIVE SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP), AND ASSEM KANSO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF LEBANESE BRANCH OF BAATH PARTY, SIGNED AGREEMENT IN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 04732 01 OF 02 260906Z

DAMASCUS PROVIDING FOR COOPERATION BETWEEN THEIR TWO PARTIES. PUBLICLY ENDORSED BY SYRIAN PRESIDENT HAFEZ ASSAD, AGREEMENT INTER ALIA PROVIDES FOR "(BROAD) NATIONAL FRONT OPEN TO ALL PARTIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND POLITICAL FORCES THAT ARE COMMITTED TO FOLLOWING GOALS AND PRINCIPLES:"

-- LOYALTY TO "FREE, INDEPENDENT, ARAB, LEBANON;"

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

-- SUPPORT FOR LEBANON'S CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY AND ITS EFFORTS TO "REBUILD STATE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS;"

-- ABOLITION OF SECTARIANISM IN ALL STATE INSTITUTIONS;

-- AMENDMENT OF ELECTORAL LAW TO "ENSURE WIDER REPRESENTATION FOR MASSES" AND TO ELIMINATE SECTARIANISM FROM NATIONAL ELECTIONS;

-- ESTABLISHMENT OF "HIGHEST DEGREE OF POLITICAL, SECURITY AND ECONOMIC COORDINATION BETWEEN LEBANON AND SYRIA;"

-- AFFIRMATION OF "LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN BROTHERHOOD" AND COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING AGREEMENTS BETWEEN LEBANESE AUTHORITIES AND PALESTINIAN LIBERATION ORGANIZATION;

-- COMMITMENT TO "ARAB SOLIDARITY" AND COORDINATION OF FOREIGN POLICY WITH ARAB CONFRONTATION FORCES;

-- ADOPTION OF NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY.

3. AGREEMENT PUTS NO RESTRICTIONS ON ADMISSION OF ANY ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT AND WILL PERMIT LEBANESE COMMUNIST PARTY AND COMMUNIST ACTION ORGANIZATION TO JOIN BNF. JUMBLATT AFTER DEATH OF HIS FATHER INITIALLY APPEARED UNDECIDED ABOUT WHETHER TO SUPPORT CONTINUED CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 04732 01 OF 02 260906Z

COMMUNIST MEMBERSHIP IN NATIONAL MOVEMENT. WHEN KAMAL SHATILA PROCLAIMED HIMSELF LEADER OF ORIGINAL BNF, HOWEVER, AND ENUNCIATED ITS PRINCIPLES LAST JUNE, PSP REFUSED TO JOIN UNLESS ALL MEMBERS OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT WERE ALSO PERMITTED TO DO SO. SYRIA AT FIRST OPPOSED ADMISSION OF AL MURABITOUN AND COMMUNISTS, BUT CAME TO REALIZE BNF COULD NOT FUNCTION WITHOUT PSP PARTICIPATION. SYRIA THEN ACCEPTED AL MURABITOUN BUT NOT COMMUNISTS. NOW SYRIA HAS ACCEPTED COMMUNISTS AS WELL, THUS AGREEING TO POSITION OF WALID JUMBLATT AS WELL AS OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER RACHID KARAME.

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 /058 W
----------024072 260917Z /21
R 260720Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5294
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BEIRUT 4732

4. IN RETURN, BY ENDORSING CLOSE COOPERATION WITH DAMASCUS, AGREEMENT INDICATES WALID JUMBLATT HAS ACCEPTED SYRIAN INFLUENCE IN LEBANON. (WALID'S FATHER KAMAL HAD BEEN AT SERIOUS ODDS WITH DAMASCUS). IN OTHER RESPECTS, HOWEVER, AGREEMENT IS REITERATION OF STANDARD PSP POSITIONS.

5. NATIONAL MOVEMENT MEMBERS HERE BELIEVE THAT WALID JUMBLATT WILL DOMINATE NEW BNF BECAUSE NEITHER SHATILA NOR KANSO HAVE SUFFICIENT POPULAR BASE TO ASSERT LEADERSHIP WITHIN IT. RACHID KARAME IS LIKELY TO BE ELECTED FRONT'S PRESIDENT BECAUSE OF HIS PRESTIGE AND AGE, THESE MEMBERS SAY, BUT JUMBLATT ENJOYS EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH KARAME AND IS LIKELY TO ACQUIESCE TACITLY IN LATTER'S FORMAL LEADERSHIP.

6. CHRISTIAN LEADERS ARE NEGATIVE. PHALANGE LEADER PIERRE GEMAYEL, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS PUBLICLY REJECTED FRONT ON GROUNDS THAT ITS MEMBERS WOULD INCLUDE "COMMUNISTS AND INTERNATIONAL LEFTISTS WHO TRIED TO DESTROY LEBANON."

7. ANNOUNCEMENT OF NEW FRONT HAS ALREADY INTENSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

DISPUTES AMONG MODERATE SUNNIS. SAEB SALAM AND HIS FOLLOWERS IN ISLAMIC GROUP HAVE REJECTED BNF AND FAVOR CONTINUED CONTACTS WITH RIGHT WING LEADERS SUCH AS CAMILLE CHAMOUN AND PIERRE GEMAYEL INSTEAD, WHILE RACHID KARAME AND HIS FOLLOWERS FAVOR COOPERATION WITH BNF. OTHER SUNNIS SUCH AS GRAND MUFTI AND MUKASSID GRADUATES SOCIETY ALSO FAVOR COOPERATION WITH BNF.

8. COMMENT: SYRIAN ENDORSEMENT OF NEW BNF ADDS UP TO TACTICAL SHIFT TO LEFT WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF SYRIA'S

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

INVOLVEMENT IN LEBANESE MOSLEM AND LEFTIST POLITICS.
CHRISTIANS ARE DISPLEASED AND REGARD SYRIAN MOVE AS
DIMINISHING SUPPORT OF THEIR OWN POSITION. SYRIA HAD
SOUGHT ALLIANCE WITH WALID JUMBLATT SINCE FIRST PROPOSING
FORMER BROAD NATIONAL FRONT IN MAY. SYRIAN WILLINGNESS
NOW TO PAY JUMBLATT'S PRICE - ADMISSION OF ALL ELEMENTS
OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT - APPEARS TO BE A SIGNIFICANT
ACHIEVEMENT FOR JUMBLATT AND, IF IT DOESN'T BACKFIRE,
MAY ENHANCE HIS POLITICAL ROLE IN LEBANON. ISLAMIC
GROUP CONSERVATIVES ARE LIKELY TO BE MAIN LOSERS, AND
ISLAMIC GROUP ITSELF TO BE SERIOUSLY SPLIT.
PARKER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGREEMENTS, PARTY ALLIANCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 26-Sep-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977BEIRUT04732
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770349-0724
Format: TEL
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770924/aaaaatoy.tel
Line Count: 182
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: eec32a3e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1140011
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW BROAD NATIONAL FRONT SIGNALS SYRIAN-WALID JUMBLATT ALLIANCE
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, PGOV, LE, SY, (JUMBLATT, WALID)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/eec32a3e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009